1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

which the food for the community was cooked, but we do not think they would touch it or assist in any way in the cooking. At Omuni a menstruous woman is isolated under a rough shelter where she is waited upon by a younger unmarried sister or cousin who, it was stated, should not herself have attained puberty. During her seclusion she may eat any food cooked at the ordinary fire, but a special platter is kept for her use. The girls who look after her suffer no restrictions. This happens every time a girl or woman menstruates.

Marriage takes place at an early age; it was said that girls sometimes married before puberty, and as we heard of this at Henebedda, Bandaraduwa, and Omuni, we see no reason to doubt the truth of the statement[1]. At Omuni it was pointed out that a certain amount of breast development was necessary before marriage, so that it is probable that connection does not antedate puberty by more than a short time.

With regard to the frequency of such child marriages, we can only say that we never saw any very young girls with babies. Perhaps at the present day prenuptial connection is more common than marriage between the very young, though it is obviously difficult to decide when prenuptial love-making between individuals destined for each other gives place to marriage, among people whose marriages are accompanied with but slight ceremony. It must be remembered that the marriage gift of landed or personal property to a son-in-law, which was formerly customary, is obsolescent at the present day, and this not only makes it more difficult to determine whether marriage has taken place, but probably actually tends to make the exact time of the assumption of the married state less clearly defined.

On account of these considerations we are unable to express any definite opinion as to the frequency of prenuptial connection, the few instances we heard of were between individuals occupying the relationship of *kura* and *naena*, who would in any case marry each other. Thus Kaira of Henebedda and his wife grew up in the same group, and as they had played together as

[1] We are indebted to Mr Frederick Lewis for the information that this is a common practice among Tamils.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

father's sister's daughter. The children of two sisters or of two brothers could not marry, and such a connection would be considered incestuous. The man goes to his future father-in-law with a present of honey, yams, grain or dried deer's flesh tied to his unstrung bow which he uses as a carrying stick. Whether he generally repeats this visit or receives his bride immediately was not clear, and probably the custom varies in this particular. Handuna of Godatalawa told us that he did not take his bride away until he had twice taken a present of food to his mother's brother (father-in-law). The bride gives her spouse a waist string of her own making which he never removes until it is worn out, when he replaces it with another made by his wife. In these particulars the marriage ceremony was essentially similar fifty years ago when it was described by Bailey. "The bachelor Veddah who meditates matrimony, himself selects the lady of his choice, wisely preferring his own judgement to that of others; and providing himself with the greatest 'delicacies of the season,' for example, a pot of honey and a dried iguano, proceeds to her father's hut and states the object of his visit. There being no objection to the proposed alliance, the father calls his daughter, who comes forth with a cord of her own twisting in her hand. She ties this round the bridegroom's waist, and they are man and wife. The man always wears this string. Nothing would induce him to part with it. When it wears out it is the wife's duty to twist a new one and bind it round him[1]."

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When a girl married, her father usually made over to his son-in-law a tract of land, generally a hill known to be inhabited by colonies of the *bambara* or rock bee (*Apis indica*), or gave him a piece of personal property such as a bow or one or two arrows. The instances in which land was given are described in the section on land transference, so that here it is only necessary to mention instances in which personal property was given. Handuna received a bow and one arrow from his father-in-law who when presenting them accompanied his gift with the remark "With this bow you must get food for my daughter." Sometimes a dog is given, and Knox was certainly right when he

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[1] J. Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 293.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Plate XXI

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Locks of hair presented to brides at marriage

[FACING p. 98]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

hypothesis that it should have arisen among them solely for that object.

We believe that a lock of hair, either from his own head or from his sister's, was a customary present from the bridegroom to the bride, and therefore to be considered part of the wedding ceremony. The evidence obtained at Bendiyagalge, though not directly bearing out this point of view, supports the hypothesis when considered in conjunction with the information given us at Sitala Wanniya. The wife of old Poromala at Bendiyagalge wore a piece of hair which Poromala had given her. He had not cut it off his own head but had saved the hair which had come out when combing his hair with his hands, and Handi his wife considered this tail of hair as a valuable possession and said she would leave it to her eldest married daughter when she died. She told us that a woman would burn her lock of hair if she had no daughters. She also said that women would only wear hair from their husbands' heads and laughed at the idea of a man wearing an extra piece of hair, although the men usually wear their hair in the same way as the women.

At Sitala Wanniya each married man was questioned separately.

Handuna, the oldest man and our best informant, said that in former days a lock of hair was always given by the bridegroom to the bride, and if he did not offer it, the young girl might ask for it and insist upon having it. In that case the prospective bridegroom would have to cut it off his own head, if his sister happened to be away at the time or if he had no sister, for it was her duty to give one to her brother if she knew that he wanted it for a wedding gift. A man would always be loath to cut his hair, and there are special regulations against this for shamans, so if the girl is willing to accept him without his present, and he is unable to obtain it from his sister or *nanna*, the gift will be allowed to lapse. This happened when both Handuna and Vela married. No man would give hair to anyone except his wife. Kaira gave his wife a lock of hair when he was married, and he obtained it in the following way. He said that when discussing the matter of his future marriage at home, and feeling sore at having no hair to give his bride, his younger

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

302 431 585 593 sister said, "Don't be sorry, I will give you a lock of my hair." She cut a lock from her own head, which he kept until his marriage when he gave it to his wife while she was still at her father's cave. Then he took her to his own cave where she made him a waist string on the second or third day after marriage. To his sister who was then unmarried he gave an axe out of gratitude. Nila cut a lock from his head to give his wife, as his sister was away at the time he was married, otherwise she would have given him one. Pema did not give his wife any hair as her mother had given her some.

302 431 585 184 Among the village Veddas at Unuwatura Bubula the custom of giving hair as a wedding gift was not known, yet the shaman's wife had a lock which her mother had given her. She assured us that only married women might wear it.

586 Anything like a formal divorce is unknown, but we heard of one instance occurring three generations ago, in which a woman who had gone to live with her husband left him and returned to her parents. The daughter of a Bingoda man, whose nickname Kupunkarea is still remembered, was given to a boy nicknamed Kankuna "Sore Eyes." As he was lazy and took no trouble to support his wife, so that she was frequently obliged to go to her parents for food, they kept her with them. Kankuna was very angry, but he did not threaten violence or attempt to bring back his wife by force. Later she was given to a Vedda of Bandaraduwa and after his death she went to live with a Sinhalese. It was said that she was an unusually pretty girl.

595 It is quite certain that polyandry never existed among uncontaminated Veddas, but at Henebedda we met with one case that must, we think, be called by this name. Before relating this we may, however, call attention to the fact that polyandry is a tolerably common practice among the Sinhalese peasants of the Vedirata, as it is among the less educated classes in other parts of the island[1].

[1] Cf. *Papers on the Custom of Polyandry as practised in Ceylon*, Government Record Office, Colombo, in which Mr R. W. Ievers, speaking of the Kegalla district, says:—"Having been for six years in charge of a Kandyan district (Kegalla), and having to deal with land cases involving rights of inheritance, and having, as Registrar of Kandyan Marriages, to hear divorce cases, I have found that the custom of polyandry was almost universal; and that in the case of a marriage registered under

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

But the Veddahs have not yet arrived at such a pitch of civilization. Divorce is unknown among them. They are kind and constant to their wives, and few of their Kandyan neighbours could say as I have heard a Veddah say, "Death alone separates husband and wife." The idea of such constancy was quite too much for one of the bystanders, an intelligent Kandyan chief, on one occasion when I was talking on these subjects to some Veddahs. "Oh, sir," he exclaimed, apologetically, "they are just like Wanderoos."* He was perfectly scandalized at the utter barbarism of living with only one wife, and never parting till separated by death.†

Tennent says they have no marriage rites; this is true; but I am surprised that no one should have told him of what very nearly approaches a marriage ceremony, and one which is curious in itself, and so far as I know, unlike any custom among other barbarous tribes. The bachelor Veddah, who meditates matrimony, himself selects the lady of his choice, wisely preferring his own judgment to that of others; and providing himself with the greatest "delicacies of the season", for example, a pot of honey and a dried iguano, proceeds to her father's hut and states the object of his visit. There being no objection to the proposed alliance, the father calls his daughter, who comes forth with a thin cord of her own twisting in her hand. She ties this round the bridegroom's waist, and they are man and wife. The man always wears this string. Nothing would induce him to part with it. When it wears out it is the wife's duty to twist a new one and

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* The Wanderoo is a large monkey common throughout the island, one of the three species of Presbytes, probably the P. Ursinus.

† I have spoken of polygamy and indiscriminate divorce among the Kandyans in the present tense. I should have used the past, for in 1859 they were abolished by law. It fell to the lot of the late Sir Henry Ward, whose name will be gratefully cherished in Ceylon as long as Ceylon exists, and whose loss is daily becoming more felt and deplored, that this remarkable change in the habits of an Oriental people should have taken place during his rule—a change, originating with the Kandyans themselves, which has given them marriage laws as pure as our own, an extraordinary proof of increasing civilization. In May 1858, a large deputation of influential chiefs waited on Sir Henry Ward, at the Pavilion, in Kandy, to seek the aid of Government to remove what they felt to be a stigma on their race and character, by abolishing polygamy and making the marriage tie a binding obligation. This was followed by a petition, signed by 8,000 chiefs and headmen on behalf of the Kandyan people, repeating their earnest prayer. The result was the enactment of an ordinance "To amend the laws of marriage in the Kandyan country," which will do more to raise the social character of the Kandyans than any other measure can do. They have reason to be proud of having spontaneously wrought this great change, and they fully appreciate Her Majesty's interest in its success, which she graciously desired should be specially made known to them.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5
Sinhalese AX4

V 585 291 bind it round him. Many a more civilised wife would rejoice if she could forge new fetters for her husband as binding as these. The utility of the string is simply to keep in its place the scanty rag which constitutes the Veddah costume.* Married or single he must wear one; but when he is married he substitutes for his batchelor's string one of the lady's twisting, and besides its use, it is emblematic of the marriage tie; for as he never parts with it, so he clings to his wife through life.†

V 582 835 I have spoken of the monogamy and conjugal fidelity of the Veddahs as favourably contrasting with the opposite practices among the Kandyans. But there was an ancient custom amongst them which has scarcely yet become extinct, a custom most revolting to every civilized mind. It is that which sanctions the marriage of a man with his younger sister. To marry an elder sister or aunt would, in their estimation, be incestuous, a connection in every respect as revolting to them as it would be to us—as much out of the question and inadmissible as the marriage with the younger sister was proper and natural. It was, in fact, *the* proper marriage, as much so as the marriage between the father's sister's son and the mother's brother's daughter is the most proper that a Kandyan can contract.‡

V 582 835 How far this practice has become obsolete it is hard to say. Amongst the Veddahs of Bintenne it has certainly ceased, and they now regard it with disgust.§ Still it has not very long died out, for many amongst them have seen the children of such marriages, and even cited some by name to me. But I question if it has yet disappeared from amongst the wilder Veddahs of Nilgala. For some time I believed that it was invariably practised there, and

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* It is, in fact, what the Singhalese call the Diya lanoowa, the "water-string," *i. e.*, the string which supports the rag of cloth which natives wear when bathing, and which is "full dress" among the Veddahs.

† The following anecdote is an apt illustration of the value set by a Kandyan on the marriage tie. One of the civil officers of the fort was travelling through his district, explaining the provisions of the new Kandyan marriage ordinance, when a native said to him—"I don't like that ordinance at all." "Why?" he asked. "Why, you tell us we are not to send away our wives, if we like. Now, suppose I bought a piece of rice land, *and afterwards found my wife did not know how to weed!*"

‡ "Every Bedouin has a right to marry his father's brother's daughter before she is given to a stranger; and hence "cousin" (bint' amm), in polite phrase, signifies "wife." Burton's *El Medina Mecca*, vol. iii. A Kandyan would regard such a marriage incestuous, for such first cousins are considered sisters. The term applied to such a female cousin as is mentioned in the text as the proper bride for a Kandyan is "nœna," which in Veddah dialect is the word for "wife." The corresponding word "noora" is the Veddah term for "husband."

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§ Mr. Birch informs me that the Veddahs of the Batticaloa district "indignantly deny marrying their sisters."

5: Spittel D-5 (ca.1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

tail through a dorsal slit, partially separating the muscle mass from the caudal vertebrae, and introducing into the space thus formed strips of fat from the animal's flank; the skin is then sewn over with bast strip and thorn, and the stuffed tail is roasted on embers and eaten forthwith, or smoked and put by for future use. 252 262 251

Young hornbills being full of fat are a special Vedda delicacy; nor is the helpless imprisoned mother spared. Even more cruel is the treatment by these merciless epicures of the young of the edible-nest swiftlet. I asked Kauwa what he did with these when out nesting. "Eat them," he said; "the eggs are small but tasty; and so are the young which cry 'ki-ki-ki' as we put them in the fire." 262

The Vedda custom of preserving venison in honey is well known. This is how it is done: Into a hollow in a rock a little honey is poured; to this is added a few pieces of venison cut up small (pork is unsuitable as the fat prevents permeation); more honey is then poured on, and more meat added; and so layer by layer, till honey and meat are well intermingled. A protecting slab is then placed over the mouth of the hole. 251

Boa fat is said to be good for fractures; the broken limb being wrapped in *riti* bark or cloth saturated with the heated oil. They say it takes a month and a half for a fracture to heal; and in this, show more good sense than certain credulous Sinhalese who assure one that their *vedaralas* can cure a fracture in the time it takes a pot of rice to boil! 752

Kauwa had many charms against wild beasts. The one for buffaloes made them bleed from mouth and nose and fall dead! If you saw a bear you should *think* the appropriate charm and tie a knot in your hair; only if the animal attacked should you shout the words. For the leopard, he had no charm: "Cha, what's the use of that," he said; "the animal is more frightened of us than we of him." 777

Of Vedda heroes, there was Yapal whose voice could be heard a hundred miles; and Balagala-seya whose arm was like a tree, who carried a bow the girth of a man's thigh, and whose arrow would go through anything; in yonder Balagala rock he lived. 773

Their dead they cover with leaves and abandon where they die, or deposit in shallow graves covered over with earth and thorns to keep the pigs away. 764

Kauwa never bathed; he confirmed the assertion by rubbing rolls of dirt off his abdomen. "Does your wife not complain," we asked. "If she did," was the characteristic reply, "I would strike her with my axe-head, and ask her why she did not think of that when she came to me." 515

Vedda nuptials are not burdened with ritual: A prospective husband, having gained the consent of the girl's parents, returns a few days later, it may be with a friend, and perhaps a monitor or two. Placing his bow and arrows on the roof of the hut, he enters. All partake of the feast of lizards and yams; the girl, seated next to her man, doles out his food, not partaking of a morsel until he has fed, and she has given him a chew of betel and water to wash his hands. The man usually throws in his lot with his father-in-law, but sometimes he takes the girl away, leaving a couple of arrows behind in exchange. The girl's parents may accompany them some distance saying by way of adieu, "Take our child and keep her well." In custom we may differ from these wild and simple folk, but in affection and solicitude are one. 583 585 591

5: Spinel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

582 The correct Vedda marriage is that between the children of a brother
835 and sister. A marriage between children of two brothers or of two sisters is regarded as incest. And here their standard is higher than ours.

587 Marriage for the Vedda is a very simple affair. Suthubanda, for instance, espoused a widow in his household. When she was freed by the death of her husband, it was right that he should take her, and he made no demur, though she was old and ugly and he young and robust.
583 Kaurala went to the younger of his two wives with a length of cloth, a bead necklace, a bangle and two hair pins, and brought her away. Gama, whose wife was an orphan of Henebedde, did much the same. But
591 the rule is that a man should cast in his lot with his wife's people. Then, the morning after marriage the pair go into the jungle and bring home, it may be a *kanava* comb, a monitor lizard, or some yams, and thus the common life begins.

585 The waist-string plays as important a part in Vedda matrimony as
291 does the ring in ours. When a woman has tied round the waist of a man a string of her own twisting, he becomes her husband. This string, some
[283 six encircling loops, lasting practically a life-time, is made of *niyande*
824] (bow-string hemp), the long bayonet-shaped leaf of which is shredded to fibre by being drawn repeatedly between the palm of the hand and a bare branch.

586 Divorce is as informal as marriage; the woman being merely returned to her parents or requested to go to whomsoever she chooses. But the Vedda is not, as a rule, unreasonably capricious in the exercise of his power; he has too great a sense of responsibility and of fair-play towards
762 the mother of his children and partner in his toil. A lad I knew blew out his chest with a gun, from remorse at having taken to himself two sisters who continually quarrelled with each other over his affections.

593 A Vedda will not hesitate to chastise his spouse when necessary; but that, after all, is only a mark of affection! We saw one belabour his wife unmercifully because she would not let him accompany us; she took all the beating she got, but had her own way in the end.

551 These people do not address their women-folk by name. Ask a man to
515 name his children, and he will stutter and stumble at the task. A Vedda hails his wife somewhat as follows: "What are you doing there? Come here and break my head." This apparently suicidal request is only his way of requesting her to perform the delightful uxorial duty of cleansing his hair of vermin.

614 The Veddas of Bingoda claim to be of the Morana *waruge*, the best
565 Vedda clan. Those of Danigala, of the Unapane clan, come next. But
515 for the Veddas of Henebedde the Bingoda folk profess disdain, calling them *Uro* (swine) and *Waliyo*, and saying it was their duty in old-time to pour water on the Morana's hands when they had fed. How much water these Moranas themselves use we have yet to learn; for, if the saying be true, that the worse the odour the better the Vedda, then the Veddas of Bingoda are aristocrats. What a thing is human nature after all, when even this wretched little remnant of humanity, without a rag to their bodies claim social precedence over each other?

614 There are nine Vedda clans or *waruges*; and each has its own story:
173 The Morana *waruge* was so called by a Sinhalese king who yearned for the *mora* fruit when it was out of season, and had his want proclaimed.